

WHAT IS THE ESCHATON?

By Charles S. Meek



The term ESCHATON refers to the so-called “last days” or “end times.” It is the same root word as ESCHATOLOGY, the study of the biblical “last things.”

There is great confusion over the biblical “end times.” After studying this for many years, I am persuaded that the culmination of NONE of the mentions of the "last days" or "end times" in the Bible can be placed outside of the first century. While this is shocking at first to some Christians, it is worth taking the time to take a closer look.

There are 15 primary mentions of the end times in the New Testament. Here are some examples:

- In Acts 2:14-20, Peter declared that he (and his contemporaries) were living in the last days predicted by the prophet Joel.
- In 1 Peter 4:7, Peter put an exclamation point on this. The “end” was AT HAND.
- In Hebrews 1:2, the writer declared the same thing: HE and HIS CONTEMPORARIES were living in the last days.
- In Hebrews 9:26, the writer declared that Jesus had appeared at the END OF THE AGES, again referring to the time he was living.

- In 1 Corinthians 10:11, Paul also insisted that he was living at the END OF THE AGES.
- In 1 John 2:17-18, John reiterated the message of the other writers by saying that it was the “LAST HOUR.”

Other references include 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; James 5:3-9; 1 Peter 1:5, 20; 2 Peter 3:3; Jude 18. All of the biblical writers spoke with one voice on this. When you look up these passages, consider “audience relevance.” That is, how would the original readers have understood these passages, i.e. to whom would they have understood that they applied?

The question is, “What were these writers declaring? The end of WHAT?” It was not the end of history, but rather, the end of the Old Covenant Age, which Jesus predicted would happen in THEIR generation (Matthew 10:23; 16:26-28; 23:29-39; 24:3, 34; 26:64). It would be associated with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (Luke 21:20-24, 32). These New Testament declarations match perfectly with Daniel’s “time of the end” which would happen when the “power of the holy people would be finished” (Daniel 12).

When the Bible speaks of the “Last Days” it is ALWAYS speaking of the Last Days of the AGE—not the Last Days of the planet or of our current age. This is confirmed by over 100 passages in the New Testament that taught the imminence of the last days’ events. Just one example is Hebrews 8:13—“In speaking of a new covenant, He makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.”

So when was the eschaton? It was the period between Christ’s first advent and his coming “in judgment” against the Jews in AD 70. The events of AD 70 washed away the visible fabric of Judaism, so that no one could any longer say that salvation was in the ritual sacrifices of Judaism. Jesus was now the only way to salvation. He is the new temple (Revelation 21:22)—the way, the truth, and the life.

Some people think that, yes, the “last days” began in the first century, but continue today. But there is not a shred of valid evidence or logic for that. That would make the end times longer than the period to which it was an end. And it would make the “end times” the beginning of something rather than the end.

Your knee-jerk reaction may be, “Well, what about this other passage . . . ?” With the knowledge about the “last days” above, let me offer some further study. Check out my websites and my book CHRISTIAN HOPE THROUGH FULFILLED PROPHECY:

<http://www.prophecyquestions.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/EvangelicalPreterism>

CHRISTIAN
HOPE through
FULFILLED
PROPHECY

Charles S. Meek

An Exposition
of Evangelical
Preterism